1. **NCAA Division I Council Transfer Working Group Referral.** The NCAA Division I Committee on Academics provided the requested feedback to the NCAA Division I Council Transfer Working Group regarding an academic-based four-year college transfer concept and effective date considerations. The feedback aligns with and reinforces the committee's previously identified recommendations and observations related to NCAA Division I four-year transfer student-athletes. [Attachment]

While the committee considered whether all student-athletes should serve a year in residence following transfer, the committee ultimately noted the lack of academic data to support treating transfer students differently based on sport rather than academic record if graduation remains a paramount goal of reforming Division I transfer rules. The committee recommended that like other NCAA eligibility rules, a student-athlete's academic record be considered to help determine whether a student-athlete may compete following transfer without serving a year in residence. Specifically, the committee agreed the data best supported an academic component that includes both a minimum grade-point average of at least 3.000 to 3.300 and holding student-athletes to current percentage-of-degree standards at the new institution.

The committee discussed how the effective date for a new uniform transfer standard should contemplate the existing transfer rules. The committee recommended an effective date approach that would both allow the new uniform rule to become available following adoption and maintain the existing one-time transfer rule for an additional two academic years. The committee agreed that allowing the two rules to coexist for two academic years would provide both appropriate access to any new transfer rule, while also ensuring adequate time for current student-athletes operating under the existing one-time transfer rule to adjust to a new standard.

2. **Academic Summit.** The committee received an update on the proposal to partner with external educational organizations to develop and host an academic summit focused on current and future issues facing higher education. The committee has continued to engage former and current leaders in higher education to formulate the strategic focus of the summit. The committee discussed how to approach some of the broad issues facing higher education through the lens of intercollegiate athletics. The committee will continue to refine its approach and development of a 2019 academic summit at its April in-person meeting.

3. **Review of Implementation of Phase One of Academic-Based Revenue Distribution and Related Operational Issues.** The committee received an update from the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Data regarding implementation of the academic-based revenue distribution (i.e., "academic unit"). Specifically, the committee approved several requested policy recommendations to address operational issues related to the academic unit, including determining that:
a. Indoor and outdoor track be treated as a combined sport for purposes of determining the eligibility calculation for the academic unit; and

b. All sports sponsored by the institution, even those not sponsored by the conference, be included in the eligibility calculation for the academic unit.

The committee agreed that treating indoor and outdoor track as a combined sport and including all sports sponsored by an institution in an institution's eligibility determination for the academic unit, aligns with current NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program policies and procedures used for calculating the NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate and the Graduation Success Rate.

The committee also reviewed and provided further feedback on the mock academic-unit eligibility reports to be distributed to the Division I membership and conferences in spring 2018. The successful implementation of the distribution is a priority for the committee.

4. Progress-Toward-Degree Review. The committee received an update on the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Student-Athlete Academics' review of the existing Division I progress-toward-degree requirements. The subcommittee noted its preference for a model that removes degree applicability for a student-athlete's 18-hour requirement after the start of their third year of collegiate enrollment but maintains all other progress-toward-degree requirements. Specifically, a student-athlete would still need to earn degree-applicable credit to satisfy the six-hour rule for regular academic term progress and postseason eligibility. The subcommittee notes this model may best achieve the desired flexibility and reduction in institutional advising burden, without jeopardizing a student-athlete's degree progress or baseline academic performance during the regular academic year. The subcommittee noted the initial support of the National Association for Academic Advisors of Athletics Board for this potential model. The subcommittee will continue to refine this model and bring a potential legislative concept for committee consideration in April.

5. NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program Update. The committee received an update on the NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program, including a summary of the outcomes for those institutions who were in the first two classes of grant recipients. The committee noted that in the aggregate, a majority of schools that received funding have increased their APRs. Additionally, feedback indicates that student-athletes exposed to summer school and leadership training for the first time because of the grant funding reported higher levels of self-confidence, and coaches have found recruiting easier because of the academic resources devoted to student-athletes.

For additional detail, the committee's full report may be accessed on ncaa.org by clicking here.
The NCAA Division I Committee on Academics discussed the referral from the NCAA Division I Council Transfer Working Group regarding possible academic standards for Division I four-year transfer student-athletes for immediate eligibility upon transfer.

The following are the committee’s recommendations and observations based on available academic data and research.

- **Academic Record.** A student-athlete’s academic record, not his or her sport, should help determine whether a student-athlete qualifies for an exception to the year in residence requirement following transfer. Data driven information related to the prediction of academic success of student-athletes upon transfer is not specific to any particular sport and therefore the approach to eligibility should be uniformly based in academics across all sports. At other junctures during a student-athlete’s collegiate participation (e.g., freshman year, transfer from a two-year college) a student-athlete’s academic record informs a student’s eligibility to immediately compete.

- **Transfer Standards and Four-Year Graduates.** Given the desire among many undergraduate student-athletes to graduate in four years or less and institutional policies that encourage a four-year graduation track, requiring academically prepared and capable students to sit out a year of competition simply because they transferred is not appropriate nor supported by available data, as it will likely extend their undergraduate enrollment beyond four years. An athletics-based approach to undergraduate transfer eligibility may financially disadvantage certain student-athletes and institutions and unnecessarily delay a student-athlete’s academic and career progress.

- **Academic Record Impacts Graduation Timeline Following Transfer.** Transferring to a Division I school presents challenges for all student-athletes, including acclimatization to a new school, new team and new curriculum. Sometimes a new degree will be pursued at the new institution. These challenges are pronounced when the student’s academic record at the previous institution is such that fewer credits transfer to the new school and/or degree program; thus, placing the student behind in his or her degree program and often behind other student-athletes with the same seasons of eligibility remaining. Conversely, a strong academic foundation at the previous institution is shown to mitigate the impact of transfer on a student’s degree progression following transfer.

- **Academic Standards for Undergraduate Transfers.** While transferring generally impacts a student’s graduation timeline, students with an “above average” academic performance at their original four-year school (e.g., a ‘B’ or better in majority of coursework) are better positioned to remain academically on track to graduate following transfer to a new four-year institution. To that end, the academic standards a student-athlete would need to meet to qualify for a transfer exception should be of “above average” rigor. Such standards will better identify those student-athletes who are academically ready for the challenge of competing while adjusting academically to the new institution. An
“above average” standard should be determined by a combination of grade-point average at the previous institution and a specified percentage of degree attainment at the new institution. Additionally, since an enrollment gap is a significant graduation risk factor, the academic standards should ensure continuous enrollment occurs for a transfer student to be immediately eligible for competition.

- **Timing of Transfer.** Degree requirements and progress-toward-degree standards require more upper-level course work to be taken in the junior and senior years of college and institutional policies often require a certain number of credits to be taken in residence. As a result, establishing higher academic standards for transfer students who enroll junior year or later to better align graduation with a student-athlete’s exhaustion of eligibility may be a reasonable approach.

- **Impact of Academic-Based Standards.** Current student-athletes in the sports of football, basketball, baseball and men’s ice hockey are not permitted to compete immediately upon transfer, absent limited extenuating circumstances (e.g., the discontinuation of a sport), regardless of the student-athlete’s academic record. An academic-based transfer exception would establish a uniform opportunity for student-athletes who meet the “above average” academic standards that predict academic success following transfer to be immediately eligible to compete regardless of the sport. Academic-based requirements would inform which student-athletes, who based on academic performance are equally predicted to achieve academic success upon transfer, have the opportunity to be immediately eligible to compete. Those student-athletes who do not achieve the academic standards to immediately compete still have the ability to practice and receive athletics aid during their academic year in residence at the new institution.

- **Campus Application of New Standard.** There is recognition that any new transfer benchmarks for immediate eligibility should be relatively easy to evaluate and to apply by practitioners. A burdensome process – either on the leaving or the receiving institution – may cause unintended delays that may detrimentally impact the student-athlete’s academic progress in the end. An academic graduation plan developed by the new institution may further assist student-athletes in making informed transfer-based decisions and demonstrate the new institution’s commitment to the student-athlete’s continued academic progress towards graduation.

*Note: The principles identified by the NCAA Division I Presidential Forum and legislative concepts being considered related to early recruiting hold promise as to improved decision-making of students and schools that may assist in the transfer environment after initial collegiate enrollment.*